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LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

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September 22, 2003

The Honorable Tom Lantos
U.S. House of Representatives
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lantos:

Since its inception, the AFL-CIO has fought to assure safe working conditions for the nation's workforce, especially for young workers, who are among the most vulnerable to long hours and unsafe conditions. By setting specific objectives to assure that young workers work in appropriate employment, for reasonable hours and in safe conditions, the Young Worker Protection Act represents significant progress toward this goal and we strongly support it.

Recent studies indicate that 80 percent of all youth in America work for pay during their high school years. However, such studies also reveal that as many as 148,000 youth are illegally employed in the United States each week. The Young Worker Protection Act would address these concerns by establishing reasonable hours of work and by setting the minimum age for all youth employment at 14 years. It also includes safeguards for appropriate employment by requiring minors under the age of 18 to obtain a work permit prior to employment. Because every year, approximately 230,000 children under the age of 18 are injured on the job, and nearly 70 children each year die from their job-related injuries, the bill updates the list of hazards for young workers and incorporates recommendations made by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to protect young workers from hazardous equipment, occupations and industries.

The AFL-CIO commends you for taking the lead in promoting improved working conditions for young workers and is pleased to endorse the Young Worker Protection Act.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION